



TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE

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PRESS RELEASE

Save Texas History essay contest open to 4th and 7th graders

Best essay wins round-trip Southwest Airline tickets and a two-night, fun-filled weekend in San Antonio

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AUSTIN — Exploring the rich history of the Lone Star State is its own reward, but the Texas General Land Office's Save Texas History program is also offering fourth- and seventh-grade students a chance to win a fun-filled weekend in San Antonio - including round-trip airline tickets on Southwest Airlines.

Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson is calling for entries in the 2011 Save Texas History Texas Travels Essay Contest. All entries must postmarked by Feb. 26.

"The idea behind this contest is to inspire Texas school kids to be proud of our heritage as Texans," Patterson said. "The more anyone knows about the story of Texas, the more they will love our state."

To participate in the contest, fourth-graders are asked to write a 200-300 word essay in which they imagine they are an early explorer of Texas. Looking through the eyes of Cabeza de Vaca, Francisco Coronado, de la Salle or any other explorer who charted what is now Texas, fourth graders must explain why they are exploring Texas and what they see as they travel. The winning entry will explain the explorers' plans to settle the new land and what they have accomplished through their journey.

Seventh graders are asked to write the story of their favorite Texas city, big or small. The length: 500-700 words, typed. Students are asked to write about the historical significance of the place they choose and give reasons why they think the community was important to the development of Texas.

The Texas Travels Essay Contest is sponsored by the General Land Office Save Texas History program and Southwest Airlines. The contest fulfills the educational mission of the Save Texas History program to promote the study of Texas history and to serve as a teaching resource.

"We are proud to be part of this contest that serves our talented pool of students in Texas," said Christine Ortega, Corporate Community Affairs and Grassroots Manager for Southwest Airlines. "As a Texas-based Carrier and the LUV Airline of Texas, Southwest Airlines is dedicated to education."

While all Texas fourth- and seventh-grade students study Texas history, Patterson hopes that asking students to write about the history of places close to their hearts will help make their stories come alive.

All essays must be postmarked by February 26, 2011 and received by March 4. All public, private and home-schooled students of appropriate age for the fourth-grade or seventh-grade are eligible to participate.

Essays will be judged on originality of idea, historical accuracy and organization. Grammar, spelling and punctuation count.

One grand prize winner per grade will receive round-trip airline tickets for four to San Antonio from any Southwest Airlines destination in Texas, hotel accommodations for two nights and tickets for additional attractions provided by the San Antonio Convention & Visitors Bureau. Ten finalists will win Save Texas History backpacks, a Certificate of Appreciation signed by Commissioner Patterson and a historic map replica from the Land Office Archives Collection.

For more details, visit SaveTexasHistory.org.

About Southwest Airlines

After nearly 40 years of service, Southwest Airlines continues to differentiate itself from other low-fare carriers--offering a reliable product with exemplary Customer Service. Southwest Airlines is the nation's largest carrier in terms of originating domestic passengers boarded and now serves 69 cities in 35 states. Southwest also is one of the most honored airlines in the world, known for its commitment to the triple bottom line of Performance, People, and Planet. To read more about how Southwest is doing its part to be a good citizen, visit southwest.com/cares to read the Southwest One Report TM. Based in Dallas, Southwest currently operates more than 3,100 flights a day and has nearly 35,000 Employees systemwide.

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